

Cuban Legislation on the Conservation of Raptors

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1. Before 1959 there was no control over taking, killing and hunting and very little control covering the destruction of the habitat (woods, etc.) of birds (and other animals). Since the rise of the present Government, however, all birds, including of course all the raptor species, are protected and serious measures have been taken in connection with the conservation of all species as well as their habitat. The results so far have been quite encouraging.
2. The Ministry of Agriculture controls the hunting and capture of all wildlife throughout the different provinces of the island, through a Corps of Forest Guards which issues the necessary licences in respect of cynegetic species during the very short hunting seasons and limits the number of specimens shot or captured.
3. The Government does not allow the organization of falconry clubs or organizations, or the practice of falconry as a general sport. However, licences may be issued for special purposes, for example for an official falconer at airports. In such a case the capture of some raptors will be permitted provided that they are released again after 3 years and subjected to periodical inspection by biologists of the Corps of Forest Guards.
4. No endemic species in peril of extinction or otherwise endangered may be exported, and other species may be exported only as interchange with other countries' zoos. The Cuban society of Biological Sciences also objects to the importation of exotic animals and consequently such instances are very rare.
5. The Cuban Ornithology Society controls and criticises the keeping of birds in captivity, recommending the breeding of exotic ciconiformes instead of promoting the capture of birds of prey and canorous birds of Cuba.
6. Cruelty is, of course, not permitted and, should such cases be discovered, the animals will be confiscated and the infractors heavily fined.
7. New legislation is being discussed and it is likely that it will cover every relevant aspect. In the meantime, many official measures are already being applied for the safeguard of Cuban fauna (and flora); indeed, some of the species considered to be practically extinct have already shown an encouraging increase in their populations.

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